WOMEN, VIOLENCE AND PATRIARCHY:
A STUDY OF SELECT INDIAN FEMINIST FICTION IN ENGLISH

SYNOPSIS SUBMITTED
IN THE PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH

Submitted By
MARIYAM PARVEEN
Registration no: 17PHEN002LK
2017

Under the supervision of
Dr. HUMA YAQUB
Assistant Professor

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY
GACHIBOWLI, HYDERABAD. 500032.
(LUCKNOW CAMPUS)

INTRODUCTION:

Ever since the dawn of humanity, women are always regarded as 'weaker sex'. Though they have the same capabilities as men, but they are always considered as inferior to men both physically and mentally as Simone De Beauvoir says "one is not born, but rather, becomes a woman" (p. 295).In a patriarchal society women are ill-treated and made to suffer in every sphere of life just because they are women as Janet Radcliffe Richards says that, "women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex" (p. 1). There is a close relationship between patriarchy and violence against women because patriarchy is a power relation between men and women and patriarchal society abused women to assert and maintain its power over them. Violence against women "is always linked with women's disempowerment" (Bhattacharya, 2007, p. 7). There are different forms of violence like physical, emotional and psychological violence that patriarchy commits against women to assert its power. The declining sex ratio in India presents violence against a woman even before she takes birth. Girls are mercilessly killed in the womb to avoid an unwanted burden on the family. If at all a girl survives then she is emotionally and physically abused; she is neglected in terms of nutrition and education and as she grows she becomes victim of child sexual abuse, molestation, sexual harassment, marital discord, dowry deaths, abduction and rape. Apart from all these, the kind of misplaced importance patriarchal society attaches to motherhood is also a cause of violence against women. In India 'infertility' is seen as a curse on a woman and a barren woman is considered to be incomplete. The stigma associated with infertility leads to a new form of violence i.e. IVF and surrogacy because of which female trafficking and exploitation of women's body increases day by day.

Indian feminist fiction provides a new insight into these multifarious forms of violence inflicted on and endured by Indian women because, "Indian feminism is clearly a response to issues specifically confronting many Indian women" (Narayan, 1997, p. 13). Indian women novelists of late 20th and 21st century like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan, Manju Kapur, Arundhati Roy, Kishwar Desai and many others through their works break their silence on "forbidden subjects like rape or sexual violence which reify female victimhood rendering women as helpless objects of male desire" (Bande, 2015, p. 247) and question the authority of men who oppressed and victimized women since ages.

Though the Indian women novelists have been studied by various critics and scholars from different aspects but very little attempt has been made to study the works of these novelists from

the perspective of violence against women in India and how patriarchy plays an important role in this. Thus the pupose of the proposed study is to intensively analyse the works of Indian women novelists to explore the role of patriarchy in violence against women, its different forms and consequences in victim's life. The novels that will be studied here are: Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror (1980), The Binding Vine (1993)* Githa Hariharan's *Thousand Faces Of Nights (1992)* Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting (1999)* Kishwar Desai's *Witness the Night (2010)* and *Origins of Love (2012).*

REFERENCES:

Bande Usha, (2015) *Writing Resistance: A Comparative Study of the Selected Novels By Women Writers.* 2nd Edition, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. Chapter – 6, p.247.

Beauvior Simone de, (1997) *The Second Sex*. Edited and Translated by H.M. Parshley, Vintage Books, New York, p. 295.

Bhattacharya Malini, (2007) " New Directions for Women's Studies." *Indian Women: Broken Words, Distant Dreams*. Levant Books, Kolkata. p.7.

Narayan Uma, (1997) *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism.* Routledge, New York. p. 13.

Richard Janet Radcliffe, (1982) *The Skeptical Feminist: A Philosophical Enquiry*. Penguin Books, London, p. 1.